Annual Report
2015
Southeast European Law Enforcement Center
1. Foreword

During the period, 2015, which is subject of this report, SELEC maintained its mission to provide law enforcement cooperation in the Southeast European region under different modalities, both operational and strategic. It is happy to see that there is an increasing trend in law enforcement agencies extending their cases to trans-border dimensions wherever it is needed.

In regard to statistical figures, the level of cooperation is satisfactory. Comparing to the past, this is however an achievement but I believe that there is still way to go in providing full collaboration, especially in consideration with the recent serious problems regarding the huge immigration movement, counter-terrorism issues and other measures in countries' combat against organized criminality.

As one of the tools in providing law enforcement cooperation, SELEC has proved its efficiency especially in its capacity to provide a real-time information exchange and prompt reactions to countries’ requests from each other, which is crucial in respect to the immediate nature of the law enforcement job.

Statistical figures have shown that the requests forwarded through SELEC channels are accomplished at a rate of 75-80% and that 90% of these requests are fulfilled in less than one month.

SELEC will continue to support its Members States’ law enforcement authorities in their trans-border cooperation against organized crime.

The outcomes of joint investigations that are coordinated under SELEC umbrella are encouraging in most of the cases, in regard to the numbers of suspects arrested and goods seized.

SELEC will also continue to develop its strategic reports which reflect the overall situation in particular fields of organized criminality in the region, reports that are shared with Member States, as well as with major international partner organizations.

Hoping to maintain the same level of success through the future period, I congratulate and thank all my colleagues, Liaison Officers and SELEC staff, as well as country officers, agencies and authorities, for their dedicated job and fruitful cooperation.

In 2015 SELEC celebrated its fourth year of coordinated efforts towards improvement of the mechanisms of interaction among law enforcement authorities of our Member States, especially during joint investigations and regional operations.

The activities conducted and implemented by the Legal and Internal Directorate of SELEC ensured the necessary legal framework and institutional support for enhancing the functionality of the Center from legal, administrative, financial, and IT&C point of view.

 Cooperation with other countries, organizations and bodies continued to be a priority in 2015, SELEC developing an effective cooperation with its partners and striving for establishing new partnerships, in the framework of the SELEC Convention.

Among the accomplishments that worth to be mentioned is the finalization of the process of

Gürbüz BAHADIR
Director General

Snejana MALEEVA
Director for Legal and Internal Affairs
The year of 2015 was marked, in terms of expression of criminal activities, by an increase in the impact of terrorist attacks, migrants smuggling, as well as a more developed and sophisticated cybercrime action of criminal groups. Furthermore, other types of serious crimes such as drug trafficking, trafficking in human beings, financial crimes or smuggling of excised goods remained a threat in Southeast Europe. In most of these criminal activities, organized crime adapted to the new realities and responses given by law enforcement agencies over the world.

SELEC has continued to provide tailored operational support to its Member States in investigating active organized criminal groups operating in the region. Consequently, in order to have a sustainable balance between the available financial resources and the increased number of performed activities, we intensified our endeavors to attract external additional funding.

SEEPAG, the prosecutorial network operating in the Southeast European region, continues to function successfully under SELEC auspices, having already 12 years of existence. During its annual meeting, the topic of mutual legal assistance related to the drug trafficking cases was discussed by the SEEPAG Members.

In its years of existence SELEC developed its capabilities, refined and enhanced its rules and procedures, diversified its policies and area of activities, the increasing number of results proving that the law enforcement cooperation at regional level is effective and efficient.

The year of 2015 was marked, in terms of expression of criminal activities, by an increase in the impact of terrorist attacks, migrants smuggling, as well as a more developed and sophisticated cybercrime action of criminal groups. Furthermore, other types of serious crimes such as drug trafficking, trafficking in human beings, financial crimes or smuggling of excised goods remained a threat in Southeast Europe. In most of these criminal activities, organized crime adapted to the new realities and responses given by law enforcement agencies over the world.

SELEC has continued to provide tailored operational support to its Member States in investigating active organized criminal groups operating in the region. Consequently, in order to have a sustainable balance between the available financial resources and the increased number of performed activities, we intensified our endeavors to attract external additional funding.

SEEPAG, the prosecutorial network operating in the Southeast European region, continues to function successfully under SELEC auspices, having already 12 years of existence. During its annual meeting, the topic of mutual legal assistance related to the drug trafficking cases was discussed by the SEEPAG Members.

In its years of existence SELEC developed its capabilities, refined and enhanced its rules and procedures, diversified its policies and area of activities, the increasing number of results proving that the law enforcement cooperation at regional level is effective and efficient.

The year of 2015 was marked, in terms of expression of criminal activities, by an increase in the impact of terrorist attacks, migrants smuggling, as well as a more developed and sophisticated cybercrime action of criminal groups. Furthermore, other types of serious crimes such as drug trafficking, trafficking in human beings, financial crimes or smuggling of excised goods remained a threat in Southeast Europe. In most of these criminal activities, organized crime adapted to the new realities and responses given by law enforcement agencies over the world.

SELEC has continued to provide tailored operational support to its Member States in investigating active organized criminal groups operating in the region. Consequently, in order to have a sustainable balance between the available financial resources and the increased number of performed activities, we intensified our endeavors to attract external additional funding.

SEEPAG, the prosecutorial network operating in the Southeast European region, continues to function successfully under SELEC auspices, having already 12 years of existence. During its annual meeting, the topic of mutual legal assistance related to the drug trafficking cases was discussed by the SEEPAG Members.

In its years of existence SELEC developed its capabilities, refined and enhanced its rules and procedures, diversified its policies and area of activities, the increasing number of results proving that the law enforcement cooperation at regional level is effective and efficient.

The year of 2015 was marked, in terms of expression of criminal activities, by an increase in the impact of terrorist attacks, migrants smuggling, as well as a more developed and sophisticated cybercrime action of criminal groups. Furthermore, other types of serious crimes such as drug trafficking, trafficking in human beings, financial crimes or smuggling of excised goods remained a threat in Southeast Europe. In most of these criminal activities, organized crime adapted to the new realities and responses given by law enforcement agencies over the world.

SELEC has continued to provide tailored operational support to its Member States in investigating active organized criminal groups operating in the region. Consequently, in order to have a sustainable balance between the available financial resources and the increased number of performed activities, we intensified our endeavors to attract external additional funding.

SEEPAG, the prosecutorial network operating in the Southeast European region, continues to function successfully under SELEC auspices, having already 12 years of existence. During its annual meeting, the topic of mutual legal assistance related to the drug trafficking cases was discussed by the SEEPAG Members.

In its years of existence SELEC developed its capabilities, refined and enhanced its rules and procedures, diversified its policies and area of activities, the increasing number of results proving that the law enforcement cooperation at regional level is effective and efficient.
2. About SELEC

Milestones:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>SECI Agreement was signed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Negotiations for the SELEC Convention started</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>SELEC Convention was signed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>SELEC Convention entered into force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Protocol on Privileges and Immunities entered into force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Headquarters Agreement with the host country was signed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At a glance

SELEC is an international law enforcement organization established to provide support to its twelve Member States and to enhance the coordination in preventing and combating all forms of crime, including transnational serious and organized crime.

The founding document of SELEC is the Convention of the Southeast European Law Enforcement Center that entered into force in 2011.

SELEC Day – 7th of October

The legal framework of SELEC ensures the base for all forms of law enforcement cooperation, reiterates the international legal personality of the Center, contains extensive rules regarding the personal data protection and offers the prerequisites for establishing database(s).

SELEC is the result of SECI Center’s transformation, thus inheriting its long term expertise and experience in successfully conducting joint investigations and regional operations, and in facilitating the swift exchange of information and requests of assistance.
This is achieved with the support of the Liaison Officers from Police and Customs authorities posted by Member States to work together at the Headquarters in Bucharest/Romania, thus making SELEC the only organization in the region that gathers Police and Customs authorities in their international cooperation.

The Headquarters Agreement between SELEC and the Government of Romania was signed on 22nd of July 2015 by Mr. Gürbüz Bahadır, Director General, on behalf of SELEC and Mr. George Ciamba, State Secretary, on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania.

The objective of this agreement is to implement the relevant provisions of SELEC Convention and the Protocol on Privileges and Immunities of the Southeast European Law Enforcement Center.

The Headquarters Agreement provides the whole range of privileges, immunities and facilities for SELEC in order to fully and efficiently implement its responsibilities and tasks.

Presently, the draft law of ratification of the Headquarters Agreement is pending on the finalization of the internal procedure of host country.

SELEC Membership

The Member States of SELEC are:

- Republic of Albania
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Republic of Bulgaria
- Republic of Croatia
- Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- Hellenic Republic
- Hungary
- Republic of Moldova
- Montenegro
- Romania
- Republic of Serbia
- Republic of Turkey
Partnership with SELEC

Cooperation with SELEC is available to any state, international organization or body which has an interest in law enforcement cooperation in the Southeast European region.

SELEC Convention provides two possibilities of establishing partnerships with SELEC, to be involved in the work of SELEC, namely Operational Partner status and Observer status.

The Operational Partner Status is open to any state, international organization or body that expresses its readiness to cooperate with SELEC, agrees to provide support to SELEC and concludes a cooperation agreement with SELEC.

The cooperation agreement shall contain, inter alia, appropriate regulations on personal data protection and security measures, and regulate the financial relations between SELEC and the respective Operational Partner.

Currently, SELEC’s Operational Partners are:

- Interpol
- Italian Republic
- United States of America

The Observer Status is open to any state, international organization or body that expresses its readiness to cooperate with and to make a contribution to SELEC.

The Observers shall cooperate in preventing and combating all forms of trans-border crime and serious crime, including terrorism, in accordance with SELEC Convention provisions and their national laws and/or statutory documents.

The Observer status with SELEC was granted to the following countries and organizations:

- Republic of Austria
- Kingdom of Belgium
- Czech Republic
- EUBAM - EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine
- French Republic
- Georgia
- Federal Republic of Germany
- IOM - International Organization for Migration
- State of Israel
- Japan
- The Netherlands
- Slovak Republic
- Kingdom of Spain
- Ukraine
- United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
- UNMiK - United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
- UNODC - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
- WCO - World Customs Organization
Management

The supreme decision-making body of SELEC is the **Council**, consisting in high-level representatives of SELEC Member States, having the authority to act on behalf of their states.

The Council has a Chairmanship that rotates annually according to an alphabetical rotation procedure, so that in 2015 the Chairmanship belonged to Hungary and the Vice-Chairmanship to Hellenic Republic.

The legal representative and chief executive of SELEC is the Director General who is assisted by two directors, Director for Operations and Director for Legal and Internal Affairs, elected by the Council. The mandate of the Director General is four years and of Directors is three years.
The **Director General** is in charge with the effective management of SELEC, developing relationships with Member States and Partners, negotiating and concluding agreements, proposing new rules and regulations to the Council, monitoring the implementation of regulations and measures regarding confidentiality of information and data security, representing SELEC and its interests, a/o.

The **Director for Operations** has as responsibilities regional coordination of law enforcement activities, organizing, facilitating and ensuring the effective exchange of information, supporting and coordinating joint investigations and regional operations, supervising the analytical process, cooperating with Task Force coordinators and managers, a/o.

The **Director for Legal and Internal Affairs** ensures the legal, financial, IT&C and administrative functioning of the Center, including drafting international agreements, developing SELEC’s internal legislation, managing SELEC’s budget, maintaining and upgrading SELEC’s information network, ensuring effective human resources management, a/o.

SELEC, representatives of its Member States, Liaison Officers, Director General, Directors, SELEC Staff, and representatives of Operational Partners are enjoying diplomatic privileges and immunities necessary for the performance of their tasks, in accordance with the Protocol on Privileges and Immunities of SELEC.

**How SELEC works**

Each of the twelve SELEC Member States appoints **Liaison Officers** from Police and Customs institutions to work at SELEC Headquarters in Bucharest.

The Liaison Officers ensure real time exchange of information and requests of assistance through SELEC’s secure channel, on a daily basis. The Liaison Officers are the direct communication link with the Member States’ competent authorities.

The Liaison Officers are supported in their work by their **National Focal Points** established in all Member States, usually in the Ministries of Interior. The National Focal Points act as single point of contact in the Member State for communications with SELEC, through the Liaison Officers of the respective Member State.

SELEC’s operational activities are conducted mainly within the framework of **8 Task Forces**, each of them being coordinated by one Member State of SELEC, and having regular meetings as expert platforms.

The Task Forces assume joint cooperation and participation of SELEC Member States’ law enforcement representatives, aiming to share information, good practices and effective crime-fighting and prevention tools in the Southeast European region.
SELEC provides the platform for all types of regional cooperation in the law enforcement area, especially in modalities such as real time exchange of information and requests of assistance, joint investigations and regional operations.

Analysis, including collecting, processing, validating, collating, dissemination of data, as the basis of the intelligence led policing, is also an indispensable component of the operational activities within SELEC.

Under SELEC’s auspices, is functioning the Southeast European Prosecutors Advisory Group (SEEPAG), established in 2003, an international mechanism for judicial cooperation having the same Member States as SELEC, created to provide prosecutorial support and assistance to SELEC in trans-border criminal investigations.

**SELEC Concept**

- Real time exchange of information and requests of assistance
- Police and Customs authorities from 12 Member states working under the same umbrella
- Supporting joint investigations and regional operations
- Elaboration of analytical products
- Involvement of prosecutors (SEEPAG)
4. Operational Activities

SELEC's operational activities continued to represent the most direct way to transpose in practice the goals and objectives of the Convention of the Southeast European Law Enforcement Center in the fight against organized crime and terrorism in the region.

Considering the new threats, trends and developments of serious crime in the region, expansion and diversification of crimes such as illegal migration, drugs, terrorism, cybercrime, money laundering, the role of SELEC in supporting the operations of its Member States was well appreciated and contributed to the success of numerous transnational operations.

The Center’s particular structure with Police and Customs authorities working together, the fast exchange of information and high mobility in organizing operational meetings are just some elements of a synergy that puts together resources from 12 countries in efficiently tackling and dismantling criminal organized groups and achieving a climate of security and safety for citizens.

In the framework of SELEC, seven Task Force meetings and one workshop were organized in 2015, within the areas of priorities, providing forums of discussion for experts from SELEC Member States and Partner’ countries and organizations.
89 joint investigations were carried out last year under SELEC’s coordination, maintaining the ascending trend recorded over the years.

4 regional operations (Mirage, Clean Earth, HIT 2-Joint Action Day Blue Amber, Know How) targeting various trans-border organized crime activities i.e. migrants smuggling, vehicle crimes, smuggling of counterfeit goods and counterfeit plant protection products and hazardous waste, were initiated and developed by SELEC, together with its Member States and Partners.

Strategic analysis, as the core business of SELEC’s analytical activities, are meant to provide a wide-range overview on different crime areas in Southeast Europe, early warning of threats and to support the decision-makers in better understanding the situation at international level in order to prepare their organizations to deal with emerging crimes e.g. updating legislation/methodologies, efficient allocation of resources towards different types of crime, setting up national priorities, a/o.

SELEC’s strategic analytical reports (Report on Trafficking in Human Beings and Smuggling of Migrants in Southeast Europe, Report on Drug Seizures in South Eastern Europe, Southeast European Tobacco Products Smuggling Situation Report, Regional Assessment on Container Security, Statistical Report on Vehicles Crimes in SELEC Member States) are prepared annually, based on data collected from the Member States.

SELEC’s Analytical Unit is also responsible for preparing the Organized Crime Threat Assessment for Southeast Europe (OCTA SEE), the preparation process for the next threat assessment OCTA SEE 2013-2016 being planned for the end of 2016.
5. Information Exchanges

The rapid exchange of information and requests of assistance within SELEC are facilitated by the National Units consisting in the Liaison Officers from Police and Customs authorities posted at SELEC Headquarters, and the National Focal Points established in each SELEC Member State.

The Liaison Officers’ presence at SELEC essentially influences the process and volume of exchanges of requests and information as a vector of communication among Member States' authorities.

Throughout 2015, a number of **23,802** exchanges of requests and information* were disseminated in the framework of SELEC, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exchanges of Requests and Information</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Among Members (Daily Exchanges)</td>
<td>14,641</td>
<td>13,092</td>
<td>21,828</td>
<td>22,018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During Regional Operations</td>
<td>792</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>1,073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Member States and Partners (Daily Exchanges)</td>
<td>1,289</td>
<td>1,105</td>
<td>893</td>
<td>711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>16,722</strong></td>
<td><strong>14,654</strong></td>
<td><strong>23,222</strong></td>
<td><strong>23,802</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The term “request” means an assistance request asking a foreign law enforcement agency for support of any type (e.g. asking to provide information), and it always needs answer in order to be considered completed. The term “information” means any type of data, information or intelligence which is sent/offered voluntarily to a foreign law enforcement agency, in general not asking explicitly for any answer (e.g. seizure notifications).
In 2015, SELEC supported four regional operations, namely *Operation Mirage* (targeting illegal migration), *Operation Clean Earth* (targeting illicit traffic of counterfeit plant protection products and hazardous waste), *Operation HIT 2-Joint Action Day Blue Amber* (targeting illicit trafficking of vehicles) and *Operation Know How* (targeting counterfeit goods).

A total of **1,073** exchanges of information and seizure messages were shared during the above-mentioned regional operations. These numbers reconfirm that regional operations are also an important field within SELEC’s information exchange mechanism.

As provided by the SELEC Convention, the Liaison Officers also exchange information with SELEC’s Operational Partners and Observers, thus enhancing the effective cooperation with our Partners.

So that a segment of SELEC’s operational activity is represented by the exchange of requests and information with the Partners. In 2015 the most intensive exchange of information and requests in both ways (information and requests sent and received) was made with United States of America, Czech Republic, EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM), France, Ukraine, Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre (CARICC), United Kingdom, Germany and Japan.

Most of the requests shared through SELEC channel in 2015 were within the framework of Anti-Drug Trafficking Task Force (292), Anti-Fraud and Anti-Smuggling Task Force (235), Task Force Mirage on Countering Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration (223) and Financial and Computer Crimes Task Force (178).

In terms of completion of requests, 883 (77% out of a total of 1,149 received requests) were completed during 2015, while 266 requests (23%) remained to be solved in the next period.

The overall picture of the answered requests by terms of completion is the following:

- 79% (695 requests) were completed in less than 30 days;
- 21% (188 requests) were completed in more than 30 days.
The Task Forces, as provided by SELEC Task Force Rules and Procedures, are hubs of specialized counter crime methodologies and good practices, focusing on combating trans-border crime, coordinated by one or more Member States, under the supervision and support of SELEC’s Operational Directorate.

In order to enhance the communication among the Task Forces, it was established a Task Force Managers’ team with the purpose to coordinate, prioritize and jointly schedule the Task Forces’ activities.

The Task Forces are:

- **Task Force Mirage on Countering Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration**
  - coordinated by Romania
- **Anti-Drug Trafficking Task Force**
  - coordinated by Republic of Bulgaria
- **Financial and Computer Crimes Task Force**
  - coordinated by Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- **Anti-Fraud and Anti-Smuggling Task Force**
  - coordinated by Republic of Albania and Republic of Croatia
- **Anti-Terrorism Task Force**
  - coordinated by Republic of Turkey
- **Container Security Task Force**
  - coordinated by Hellenic Republic
- **Stolen Vehicles Task Force**
  - coordinated by Hungary
- **Environment and Nature Related Crimes Task Force**
  - coordinated by Hungary
In the frame of Task Force activities, SELEC Management, Liaison Officers and staff, as well as Member States’ representatives participated in 114 international meetings during 2015. Most of these activities were Task Force meetings, meetings for coordination of joint investigations, as well as various international meetings in which SELEC was represented.

### International activities by topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Drug</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THB and Migrant Smuggling</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Fraud and Anti-Smuggling</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stolen Vehicles</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and Computer Crimes</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Terrorism</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Container Security</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment and Nature Related Crimes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Issues</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>138</strong></td>
<td><strong>114</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A total number of 223 requests and 116 pieces of information were initiated among countries in the framework of the Task Force Mirage on Countering Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration.

In 2015, SELEC was involved in the coordination of 24 joint investigations in this field and organized or supported participation in 21 meetings, including the annual Task Force meeting, 12 operational meetings dedicated to ongoing joint investigations within Southeast European region, and 8 other international meetings on trafficking in human beings and migrants smuggling issues.

Task Force Meeting
The 22nd Task Force meeting on Countering Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration was held in Bucharest/ Romania, on 18th of June 2015. Representatives of SELEC Member States and Partners, such as France, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and Kingdom of Spain attended the meeting.
The aims of the meeting were the evaluation of the regional situation on trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants for 2014, discussions on trafficking in persons’ related issues, and planning future operational activities.

On this occasion, the 2014 Report on Trafficking in Human Beings and Smuggling of Migrants in Southeast Europe was discussed, as well as successful joint investigations in the field of migrants smuggling.

In the period 29th June – 03rd of July 2015, SELEC hosted at its premises the CEOP Regional Conference on Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (CSEA) and Other Forms of Cyber Enabled Crime organized by UK National Crime Agency.

Related to the involvement in activities carried out at international level, SELEC was represented at the 4th Meeting of Project “VICTOR” organized by the NGO Smile of a Child, OSCE Annual Police Experts Meeting entitled “Fighting organized crime in the OSCE area with a focus on THB and irregular migration”, Regional Coordination Meeting in the field of countering Trafficking with Migrants organized by General Inspectorate of Romanian Police, Conference within “Project on National Approach to compensation of victims of Human Trafficking” organized by Romanian National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (ANITP) and Council of Europe, Workshop on Detecting, Investigating and Disrupting Illicit Financial Flows derived from Human Trafficking organized by UNODC.

Key findings of the 2014 Report on Trafficking in Human Beings and Smuggling of Migrants in Southeast Europe

**Trafficking in human beings:**

In the last three years it was noted a constant decrease of the identified victims, in 2014 being registered the lowest number of victims in the last five years (2,089 victims, 75% adults and 25% minors), out of which:

- 55% of the adults were sexual exploited and 35% labor exploited;
- 81% of minors were sexual exploited, 7% for child pornography, 6% labor exploited and 5% exploited for other crimes (begging, pick-pocketing, a/o).

The number of victims trafficked domestically, and also those exploited internationally remained relatively unchanged: 53% are nationals of the reporting countries exploited abroad, 39% are citizens of the reporting countries exploited domestically, while 8% are foreign citizens exploited in SELEC Member States.
With respect to the number of foreign victims, a 50.9% decline was registered.

The main destinations for trafficking in human beings were Western European countries and Russian Federation; the latter appears to be specific only for the victims from Republic of Moldova and Republic of Serbia.

The number of reported victims assisted by International Organization for Migration and NGOs was 616.

At least 239 victims, adults and minors, were repatriated to SELEC Member States in 2014; 73% of the repatriated victims were adults and 27% were minors.

In 2014, 2,122 suspects were investigated for human trafficking.

With regard to the modalities used, it appears that violence is less used to convince victims of sexual exploitation; "soft methods" like emotional dependence, “lover boy” tactics, or the sharing of profit with the victims prevail.

**Migrants smuggling:**

Southeast Europe is largely a transit area for illegal migrants on their way to Western Europe.

222,476 detections of illegal migrants were recorded in 2014 (this representing an increase with 12% compared with 2013); in regard to the citizenship of migrants detected, Syria and Afghanistan are on top.

During 2014, 84% of the total number of detections of illegal migrants in the Southeast European region was made at the border and only 16% inland.

12,914 detections referred to migrants from SELEC Member States representing only 6% of the total number of detections.

For 2014, a total of 12,944 expulsions (including readmissions) of illegal migrants from SELEC Member States were reported.

94,743 asylum applications were registered in the region. The analysis of the data, compared with the previous years, reveals that the number of asylum application continues to follow an upward trend.

Related to the citizenship, migrants who attempted to illegally cross the border during the period of asylum procedure were mainly from Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq.

The refugee status or temporary humanitarian protection was granted to at least 8,253 persons. Comparing with the previous year, it was observed a serious increase in this matter, namely four times more than in 2013.

In Southeast Europe, smugglers range from individuals to well-organized trans-border criminal networks.

The organized criminal groups from the region involved in smuggling of migrants are parts of larger international networks acting across the countries on the route.
Regional Operation MIRAGE

Operation MIRAGE 2015 was carried out in two phases. The first phase consisted of exchanging information and intelligence regarding the targeted phenomenon among Member States, and lasted one month. The second phase - region-wide one time operation MIRAGE 2015 - lasted for a period of 6 days, in November 2015. Law enforcement authorities from all SELEC Member States took part in the operation (Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Bulgaria, Republic of Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Hellenic Republic, Hungary, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Republic of Serbia and Republic of Turkey).

Primarily, the aim of the Operation MIRAGE 2015 was to support an intense exchange of information and intelligence among participating countries in relation to traffickers, migrants, transporters, new routes, new modus operandi, a/o. During the operation 779 exchanges of information were recorded.

Joint investigations

A total number of 24 joint investigations were supported by SELEC under the umbrella of the Task Force Mirage.

Joint investigation SETRA involving Republic of Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Republic of Turkey led to 18 defendants sent to court and seizure of 20,000 Euro and 5 vehicles used for migrants smuggling. The joint investigation targeted an organized criminal group dealing with smuggling of migrants originating from Middle East, who travelled via Romania (with tourist visas) to Western Europe, especially to Germany, Austria and Italy. The success of Operation SETRA was the result of the significant efforts carried out by the investigators and the exceptional international and inter-institutional cooperation.

This joint investigation was awarded the First prize for the first semester of 2015 by SELEC Bi-annual Awards Committee.
Joint investigation SHEPHERD involving Hungary, Republic of Serbia and Republic of Turkey led to the arrest of 18 persons, other 5 persons being under judicial control, seizure of forged identification/travel documents and of vehicles used for migrants transport.

The investigation targeted an organized criminal group dealing with smuggling of migrants from the territory of Republic of Turkey and from African-Asian countries to the European Union countries by using forged passports. Members of the organized criminal group, speaking the language of the transit countries, were accompanying the migrants in order to prevent further controls at the border check points. From the transit countries, the migrants, with forged EU passports, were taking flights directly to Schengen countries.

*This joint investigation was awarded the Second prize for the first semester of 2015 by SELEC Bi-annual Awards Committee.*

Joint investigation TENACIOUS targeted an international criminal network dealing with smuggling of migrants from Middle East via Romania to Western Europe. Competent authorities from Republic of Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Republic of Turkey cooperated under SELEC umbrella for gathering various types of evidences and for exchanging operative information throughout the investigative process and also after the prosecution of the network members. As a result, 16 persons were arrested and prosecuted, 25,000 Euro were seized and almost 180 migrants were detected and assisted.

*This joint investigation was awarded the Third prize for the second semester of 2015 by SELEC Bi-annual Awards Committee.*
Joint investigation **KASHMIR** involved Hungarian and Serbian authorities which successfully dismantled an international organized group that smuggled illegal migrants from the territory of African-Asian countries to Western Europe countries. As a result, 38 persons were arrested for smuggling more than 390 migrants, and 366,000 Euro, firearms, drugs, and 8 vehicles were seized.

*This joint investigation was awarded the Second prize for the second semester of 2015 by SELEC Bi-annual Awards Committee.*

Joint investigation **SELCUK** involved law enforcement authorities from Republic of Bulgaria, Romania and Republic of Turkey which targeted an organized criminal group dealing with illegal migration, transferring Iraqi and Syrian citizens from Republic of Turkey via Republic of Bulgaria using Romanian and Turkish bus companies. The case succeeded with the arrest of 7 persons and identification of more than 200 illegal migrants.

Joint investigation **THE GUIDE** targeted an organized criminal group dealing with migrants smuggling from Central and South Asia transiting Russian Federation, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Romania and Hungary towards Western Europe. The operation, which succeeded with the arrest of 13 persons suspected of smuggling more than 200 migrants, involved law enforcement agencies from Hungary, Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine.
A total of 292 requests and 421 pieces of information were initiated and exchanged in 2015 among SELEC Member States and Partners (countries and organizations) in the framework of the Anti-Drug Trafficking Task Force (ADT TF).

In 2015 SELEC was involved in the coordination of 31 joint investigations and organized and/or supported participation in 29 meetings, including the annual ADT TF meeting, 18 operational meetings dedicated to ongoing joint investigations within Southeast European region, and 10 other international meetings on drug-related topics.

**Task Force meeting**

The 21st Anti-Drug Trafficking Task Force meeting was held in Arbanasi/Bulgaria, on 26 – 27th of May 2015. The meeting was attended by 58 participants from SELEC Member States and from France, Germany, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and USA.
Participants assessed the achievements of the previous year in the field of combating trans-border drug trafficking, shared challenges and good practices, discussed and planned future activities. The 2014 Report on Drugs Seizures in South Eastern Europe was presented during the meeting, being underlined the situation for each type of drugs in terms of cases, quantities seized, reason of control, method of trans-border transportation, routes, concealment methods, offenders. The awareness on the threat posed by the new psychoactive substances (NPS), having a devastating effect on the users, was raised. The participants strongly underlined the necessity to increase the institutional cooperation among SELEC Members States and Partners, by facilitating the exchange of information and sharing of good practices.

As decided during the 2014 Anti-Drug Task Force meeting, the Manual on controlled deliveries was updated and disseminated to the Member States. The process of updating the manual entailed gathering updated information from all SELEC Member States, followed by the integration of the up-to-date data into one unique manual.

In 2015 SELEC supported the organization of a Training on countering drug trafficking and money laundering for Saudi Arabia Law Enforcement officers, co-organized with the Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Bucharest.

Related to the involvement in activities carried out at international level, SELEC was represented at the Seminar on enhancing cross-border law enforcement cooperation to reduce drug supply organized by the Academy of European Law (ERA), Paris Pact Tri-fold Expert Working Group on Cross-border Cooperation, Regional Workshop on “New Trends and Identification Techniques in Detection of the New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) and Co-operation among Law Enforcement Agencies in South Eastern Europe” organized by OSCE, the 2nd Meeting on Controlled Deliveries Handbook organized by Pompidou Group in Cooperation with EUROJUST.

Findings of the 2014 Report on Drug seizures in South Eastern Europe

The opium-based drugs (including opium, heroin and morphine) seized in the region in 2014 amounted almost 16.8 tons; the total detained quantity increased by 2.9% comparing to the previous year. Heroin seizures increased by 3% (from 16,069.620 kg in 2013 to 16,559.231 kg in 2014); it was noticed an ascending trend regarding the quantity of heroin detained in the last four years. Heroin represents 98.6% of the total quantity of opiates seized, being undeniably the most important opium-based type of drug smuggled in the region. The highest amount of heroin was seized by Republic of Turkey, more than 12.6 tons, representing 76.4% of the total quantity confiscated in the SELEC region, followed by Hellenic Republic with 2.5 tons. The region continued to be on the major transit route of heroin from Afghanistan towards Southeast and Western Europe. The main destination countries besides SELEC Member States were The Netherlands, Belgium, Poland, Germany and Italy. 52.5% of total amount was related to lorries and 38.9% to passenger cars. 49.6% of total quantity was seized based on intelligence and 42.2% on risk analysis.

South America remained the main source of cocaine. The seized cocaine amounted 1,049.236 kilograms in 913 cases, this representing a 22.4% decrease in comparison with 2013. Amounts over 200 kilograms were seized by Republic of Turkey, Hellenic Republic and Montenegro. The biggest reported seizures were on the route Panama-Hellenic Republic (233.715 kg) and on the route Ecuador-Spain-Malta-Montenegro-Republic of Albania (227.590 kg). 89% of quantities were related to maritime transport and 3.1% to air couriers. 84.4% of total quantity was seized based on risk analysis and 10.8% on intelligence.
Cannabis remained the first ranked drug in terms of cases and quantities seized. The total amount of cannabis products (marijuana and hashish) seized in 2014 amounted almost 250 tons, with 22.9% less than 2013. In the last five years the quantity of seized marijuana increased year by year; in 2014 by 3.7% to 237,624.961 kg. Republic of Turkey seized 45.2% of the total amount, Republic of Albania 42.8% and Hellenic Republic 8.2%. Substantial quantities of cannabis were detained from illegal plantations, as follows 482,378 kg and 8,355,694 pieces/plants. Hashish significantly decreased by 87.3%, representing 4.8% of the total amount of cannabis products confiscated in the region, almost the entire quantity being reported by Republic of Turkey. Exploitation by the traffickers of South West branches of the Balkan Route was reconfirmed. At regional level, the most significant quantities of marijuana were transported by lorries (70.7%). 72.4% of total quantity of seized marijuana resulted out of risk analysis and 17.6% of intelligence.

The following quantities of synthetic drugs were seized: Amphetamine: 1,852 cases – 300.167 kilograms, Ecstasy: 563 cases - 1,658.623 kilograms, Methamphetamine: 487 cases - 159.614 kilograms. The biggest quantity of amphetamine was detained by Republic of Bulgaria, namely 182.792 kg, the biggest quantity of ecstasy was detained by Republic of Turkey (1,328.252 kg) and the biggest methamphetamine quantity was detained by Republic of Turkey i.e. 120.350 kg. With respect to reason of control, 74.8% of the seizures of synthetic drugs were based on risk analysis and 13.8% on intelligence.

Related to other drugs, a number of 5,662 cases, 407.195 kg and 19,029 pills/pieces were recorded in relation to New Psychoactive Substances, People’s Republic of China remaining the main source country. In the last two years important seizures of Khat were registered.

138 Organized Crime Groups consisting of 584 persons were reported as dismantled in 2014.

20 “controlled deliveries” were reported, these leading to the arrest of 28 persons involved in drug trafficking.

Joint investigations

A total of 31 joint investigations were coordinated by SELEC in the framework of the Anti-Drug Trafficking Task Force.

Joint investigation SKIPER/TOWER involving Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro targeted an organized criminal group dealing with trafficking and selling of marijuana, hashish and heroin from Republic of Albania through Montenegro to Bosnia and Herzegovina. An operational meeting was supported by SELEC. The investigation led to the arrest of 8 persons and seizure of drugs in approximate value of 30,000 Euro, several motor vehicles, weapons, ammunition, explosives, mobile phones and money obtained from drugs selling.

This joint investigation was awarded the Second prize for the first semester of 2015 by SELEC Bi-annual Awards Committee.
Joint investigation **GREEN ARROW** involved the competent authorities from Republic of Bulgaria, Romania, Republic of Turkey and led to the arrest of 4 persons and seizure of 333 kg heroin. Two (2) luxury cars, mobile phones, computers, laptops and 136,000 Euro were found and seized following house searches. As the members of the criminal network used to act in many states, in order to prove the criminal activities, cooperation among the competent authorities of the above-mentioned SELEC Member States, as well as Ukraine, BKA and DEA was developed.

*This joint investigation was awarded the Second prize for the second semester of 2015 by SELEC Bi-annual Awards Committee.*

Joint investigation **CADDY** involved the competent authorities from Republic of Bulgaria and Romania and led to the arrest of 3 persons (including the organizer) and seizure of 16.5 kg heroin. The organized criminal group was consisting of Turkish, German and Romanian nationals involved in heroin trafficking from Republic of Turkey via Republic of Bulgaria, Republic of Serbia or Romania to Western Europe.

*This joint investigation was awarded the Second prize for the second semester of 2015 by SELEC Bi-annual Awards Committee.*
Joint investigation MASKA was conducted by competent authorities from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Croatia and Montenegro and led to the arrest of 24 persons, seizure of marijuana, 1,750 cartons of cigarettes and 5 vehicles.

This joint investigation was awarded the Third prize for the first semester of 2015 by SELEC Bi-annual Awards Committee.

Joint investigation VODNO/CHEMA involved the competent authorities from Republic of Albania, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Serbia and Republic of Turkey and led to the arrest of 17 persons and seizure of different types of drugs (marijuana, heroin, cocaine). During the investigation, the members of the international organized criminal group were identified as being involved in the organization of heroin transports from Republic of Turkey through Hellenic Republic and Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, to the European Union countries. They also organized shipments of marijuana from Republic of Albania to Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia with final destination Republic of Turkey.

This joint investigation was awarded the Third prize for the second semester of 2015 by SELEC Bi-annual Awards Committee.
A total of 178 requests and 49 pieces of information were initiated among member countries and partners in the framework of the Financial and Computer Crimes Task Force.

In 2015 SELEC organized or supported participation in 13 meetings and activities at international level including the Task Force meeting, 9 operational meetings dedicated to ongoing joint investigations within Southeast European region and other international meetings on related topics.

Task Force meeting

The Financial and Computer Crime Task Force meeting was held on 20 – 21st of October 2015 in Ohrid/Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia with participants from the competent law enforcement agencies from SELEC Member States and from banks, financial service providers, payment cards service providers, mobile operators and other relevant institutions from the member countries (Casys, MK Bank Fraud Forum, Western Union, MK TELEKOM, RS TELEKOM). The participants in the Conference had a multi-disciplinary approach in the exchange of experience and trends in the area of financial and computer crime and digital forensics.
By directing the attention on the increasing threat posed by these crimes, among the main topics of the meeting were the e-commerce, computer frauds, and regional and international cooperation as essential issues in identifying and investigating such crimes.

The importance of international cooperation and the cooperation with private sector was highlighted, pointing out its added value within the course of investigations.

Related to the involvement in activities carried out at international level, SELEC was represented at the Regional Coordination Meeting in the field of Cyber criminality organized by the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police, Second meeting under Cybercrime@EAP on "Improving International Cooperation on Cybercrime in the Eastern Partnership Region" organized by the Council of Europe.

**Joint investigations**

A total number of 11 joint investigations were supported by SELEC under the umbrella of the Financial and Computer Crime Task Force.

**Joint investigation SIMBOX** involved authorities from Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Republic of Serbia, and targeted an organized criminal group dealing with illegal transfer of international phone traffic to national phone traffic. The operation led to the arrest of 1 person, placing 10 persons under financial investigation, and seizure of several SIMBOX devices, over 40,000 SIM cards, and computer equipment.

The organized criminal group illegally started using telecommunication devices for the use of telephone calls termination. The devices were connected through internet and using the network of foreign mobile communication operators, with their SIM cards, were establishing international communication at the price of a local voice call. In this way they bypassed international telephone traffic using “VOIP” technologies on unregistered pre-paid mobile telephone terminals.

As a result of this criminal activity, the mobile communication operators suffered a financial loss of more than half a million Euro.

This kind of cybercrime is increasing and is a real problem to the mobile communication operators in most of the countries from the SEE region.

*This joint investigation was awarded the First prize for the first semester of 2015 by SELEC Bi-annual Awards Committee.*
Joint investigation DEPOT involved competent authorities from Republic of Bulgaria and Republic of Serbia, targeting an organized criminal group dealing with storing, trafficking and distribution of falsified money of very good quality with nominal value of 200, 50 and 20 Euro. Based on the information and evidences exchanged, three independent criminal groups dealing with this kind of criminal activity were identified by Serbian authorities, all being connected with the same suspect in Republic of Bulgaria. The case succeeded with the arrest of 5 persons and seizure of drugs, forged documents for annual technical vehicles' inspection, and forged Euro bills (in an amount of 21,600 Euro), as well as huge amount of hologram stickers for mandatory vehicle insurance.

Joint investigation FRENKLIN targeted an organized criminal group involved in manufacturing and distributing counterfeit money in denomination of 100 USD. Based on the analysis of the counterfeiting techniques and materials used, it was concluded that the seized counterfeit bills were the result of the same manufacturing process. The cooperation among the investigators from the involved countries was based on timely exchange of information through SELEC channels and further organization of operational meetings supported by SELEC. This joint investigation, involving the competent authorities from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Croatia, Montenegro, Romania and Republic of Serbia, led to the arrest of 27 persons, seizure of 32,000 Euro and more than 2,400 pieces of forged 100 USD bills. During the investigation, due to the special investigative measures carried out, Montenegrin Police also solved another serious case related to a bomb attack and setting on fire the Police Chief’s vehicle.

This joint investigation was awarded the First prize for the second semester of 2015 by SELEC Bi-annual Awards Committee.
A total of 37 requests and 16 pieces of information were initiated among member countries and partners (countries and organizations) in the framework of the Stolen Vehicles Task Force.

In 2015, SELEC was involved in the coordination of two joint investigations and organized or supported participation in several meetings, including the annual Stolen Vehicles Task Force meeting, an operational meeting dedicated to ongoing joint investigations within Southeast European region and other international meetings on stolen vehicles related topics.

Task Force meeting

The 12th meeting of the Stolen Vehicles Task Force was held on 1st of April 2015, in Bucharest, and was attended by participants from SELEC Member States and from EUBAM, EUROPOL, Italy, Kingdom of Spain and GIE ARGOS.
In order to have a general overview of the situation in the region, the participants presented the national situation on the current vehicles crimes and related statistics, new trends and challenges, recent investigations and best practices examples, and also made proposals for future activities. The Evaluation Report of the Regional Operation HIT, as well as the Statistical Report on Vehicle Crime in SELEC Member states were also presented.

The participants in the meeting highlighted that the phenomenon of stolen vehicles represent a threat that goes beyond national boundaries, making the international cooperation an essential prerequisite to prevent and combat more efficiently this type of crime.

As regard the involvement in other international initiatives on combating stolen vehicles, SELEC was represented at the EUBAM Task Force Vehicle Crimes meeting.

**Analytical Evaluation Report on Operation HIT**

Operation HIT was carried out during June 2014. National authorities from all SELEC Member States were involved in the operation: Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Bulgaria, Republic of Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Hellenic Republic, Hungary, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Republic of Serbia and Republic of Turkey. EUBAM, Europol, Kingdom of Spain, Germany, France and Italy also participated in this operation.

Overall there were 207,290 checked vehicles, 135,681 checked persons and 131,876 checked documents.

Regarding vehicle checks, 57 positive hits encountered in the ASF, a number of 82 hits in SIS and 35 in the national databases.

A total number of 201 vehicles were seized/detained during the operation, the three most seized brands of seized vehicles being Mercedes, Opel and Volkswagen.

Highways represent the place where most of the seized vehicles were hit, followed by scrap yards, border crossings and registration offices/authorities.

Regarding type of offence, theft placed first, followed by vehicles with altered identification marks and forged document(s) presented.

The reporting countries indicated as country of offence a country from outside the SELEC region in 71% of the cases, while the remaining 29% were cases where the country of offence was from SELEC region.

In almost all cases, the reporting countries (as countries of seizure) mentioned themselves also as destination countries for the stolen/misappropriated vehicles.

In relation to the country of destination, in most of the cases, the reporting countries indicated a country from the SELEC region.

In most of the cases, the reported detainees were nationals/citizens of the reporting countries.

The estimated value of the seized vehicles: **1,694,100 Euro.**

In terms of vehicles subject of a crime in Southeast European region the following figures were reported:

- 58,153 vehicles in 2010 (estimated value of almost 590 million Euro);
- 63,426 vehicles in 2011 (estimated value of app. 634 million Euro);
- 62,378 vehicles in 2012 (estimated value of 624 million Euro);
- 57,304 vehicles in 2013 (estimated value of more than 573 million Euro)

The proportion of different types of vehicles subject of a crime was:

- In 2010, almost 68% of the vehicles were passenger cars, 22% - motorbikes and more than 9% trucks;
- In 2011, the percentage of the cars decreased to 65%, the percentage of motorbikes remained similar (22%), while the share of trucks increased to 11%;
- In 2012, compared to the previous year, the percentage of the passenger cars went slightly up to almost 66%, while the percentage of the motorbikes and trucks remained similar (22% motorbikes and 11% trucks);
- In 2013, the ratio of passenger cars slightly increased to 67%, the percentage of trucks remained similar (11%), while the percentage of motorbikes dropped to 21%.

In 2013, for the second consecutive year, the number of reported vehicles subject of a crime decreased (8.1% from the level registered in 2012).

Theft was the main method to misappropriate a vehicle in 2010-2013 in the region (92% of the total in both 2010 and 2011, 90% in 2012 and 89% in 2013).


The situation of passenger cars subject of a crime in the region in the period 2010-2013 was as follows:

- 39,441 cars in 2010 (estimated value app. 395 million Euro);
- 41,213 cars in 2011 (estimated value of more than 412 million Euro);
- 40,855 cars in 2012 (estimated value of over 408 million Euro);
- 38,618 cars in 2013 (estimated value up to 390 million Euro).

In 2011, compared to the previous year, the number of cars subject of a crime increased at regional level by 4.5%, while in 2012 compared to 2011 the total number decreased by 0.9%. In 2013, the number of cars subject of a crime continued the downward trend and decreased by 5.5% from the level recorded in 2012.

Theft was the main method to misappropriate a passenger car in 2010-2013 in the SELEC region (89% of the total cars in 2010 and 2011, 85% in 2012 and 89% in 2013).

By a large amount, Volkswagen was the most misappropriated car in the region in 2010-2013; the second most misappropriated cars in the region being BMW and Mercedes.
**Operation HIT 2 – Joint Action Day BLUE AMBER**

Having in mind the excellent results of previous SELEC operations and taking into consideration that the Balkans region is one of the priority areas of the fight against serious and organized crime, on the initiative of the Hungarian National Police a new regional operation was proposed to fight against illicit trafficking of vehicles with the active involvement of SELEC, EUROPOL (as part of the EMPACT Joint Action Days series) and INTERPOL.

The new operation, code-named Operation HIT 2 - Joint Action Day BLUE AMBER, was carried out during 1st – 3rd of June 2015, with the participation of SELEC Member States and Partners.

During the three-day operation, SELEC’s participating Member States seized vehicles estimated at a value of more than 1.1 million Euro, whereas the estimated overall value of the seized vehicles, including the participating partners, overpassed 1.5 million Euro.

**Joint investigations**

Two joint investigations were supported by SELEC under the umbrella of the Stolen Vehicles Task Force.

**Joint investigation ALEX BMW**, conducted by competent authorities from Republic of Bulgaria and Romania, targeted an organized criminal group involved in vehicle crimes. The *modus operandi* used by the criminal group was stealing cars, disassembling them and further selling the car parts on the territory of both countries. One operational meeting was supported by SELEC. As a result of the investigation the main suspect and the group members were arrested and charged for vehicle crimes and also for possession of drugs.
A total number of 235 requests and 892 pieces of information were initiated among member countries and partners (countries and organizations) in the framework of the Anti-Fraud and Anti-Smuggling Task Force.

In 2015, SELEC was involved in the coordination of 13 joint investigations and organized or supported participation in 13 meetings, including the annual AFAS TF meeting, 7 operational meetings dedicated to ongoing joint investigations within Southeast European region and other international meetings on related topics.

**Task Force meeting**

The 15th meeting of the Anti-Fraud and Anti-Smuggling Task Force was held on 04 – 05th of June 2015 in Bucharest/ Romania, back to back with the IPLEC Specialized Training on Counterfeiting Issues. Participants from SELEC Member States and from SELEC Partners (EUBAM, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and United States of America) and from the private sector (British American Tobacco, Japan Tobacco International, Philip Morris International, Imperial Tobacco and Pharmaceutical Security Institute) attended the event.
During the first day of the event, dedicated to the AFAS TF meeting, the 2014 Southeast European Tobacco Products Smuggling Situation Report was presented, while the second day of the meeting was dedicated to the Training on counterfeit medicines, provided by representatives of Pharmaceutical Security Institute. The 2014 SEE Tobacco Products Smuggling Situation Report provides an overview on cigarettes, smoking tobacco and raw tobacco seizures, and results of the analysis.

Related to the involvement in activities carried out at international level, SELEC was represented at the JTI International Conference on the Shadow Economy and Taxation and in two meetings of EUBAM’s Task Force on Tobacco.

Southeast European Tobacco Products Smuggling Situation Report 2014 – Key findings

The total amount of cigarettes seized in Southeast Europe in 2014 was around 4 billion pieces in 66,941 cases. A small increase regarding both quantities and number of seizures was observed in comparison with the previous year.

The total number of cigarettes seizures made in 2014 exceeding the threshold of 10,000 pieces was 5,677, adding up more than 850 million pieces.

Regarding the cases with threshold below 10,000 pieces, the law enforcement authorities from SELEC Member States seized over 39 million pieces of cigarettes in 21,730 cases.

In comparison with the previous year, it was observed a substantial decrease both in terms of number of cases and amount of smoking tobacco seized (188,104 kilograms).

The total quantity of raw tobacco seized in the SEE region during 2014 was of 165,607 kilograms. Comparing with 2013, the total amount of raw tobacco seized increased by 182%.

30,000 seizures of tobacco products (cigarettes, smoking and raw tobacco) were made inland; 2,026 seizures at the border crossing points and 416 seizures at the green border.

In 2014, intelligence led to the seizure of 63% of the total amount of cigarettes, while risk analysis contributed to 22%, as follows: 104,289 kg of raw tobacco and 43,238 kg of smoking tobacco were seized based on intelligence while 11,986 kg of raw tobacco and 112,256 kg of smoking tobacco on risk analysis.

The highest number of tobacco products (cigarettes and smoking tobacco) cases was related to road transport. In 2014, the number of seizures in which road and rail transport were used increased, while the number of cases in which air and maritime transport were used decreased. Cars/passenger vans were used in 72% of the cases in which road transport was involved.

As in the previous year, in 2014, maritime containers remained the most important type of transport regarding large quantities of smuggled cigarettes while the trucks/lorries were ranked second place.

In 70% of the cases the cigarettes were hidden in the vehicle’s construction and in 30% of the cases were hidden among cargo. Smoking tobacco was hidden in the construction of the vehicle in 31% of the cases and among cargo in 69% of the cases.

The law enforcement authorities from SELEC Member States reported 190 different brands of cigarettes detected.

In terms of authentication, the biggest quantities seized were those without excise duty stamps, representing 44%, followed by original cigarettes (40%), cigarettes with authentication to be established (11%), cigarettes with duty stamps of a foreign country (3%), counterfeited and duty free cigarettes (1% each).
Having in mind the strategic geographical position, countries from Southeast Europe are still on the major transit route of cigarettes smuggling.

The reported departure/transit countries with significant quantities of cigarettes were: United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Cyprus and Malaysia.

The coastlines of Southeast Europe, particularly Greek coasts were affected by smuggling of cigarettes, mostly coming from Egypt, Malaysia, Cyprus, United Arab Emirates, Philippines and Taiwan.

The smuggling of tobacco products in Southeast European region was mostly recorded by land, illustrated by the seizures made at the land borders representing 98%, while the amount of cigarettes seized at maritime borders represented 1% and air borders 1%.

**Regional Operation KNOW HOW**

The aim of the Operation KNOW HOW, proposed by Albanian Customs, was the detection and detention of counterfeit goods entering SELEC Member Countries both in commercial and non-commercial consignments transported by all means of transport (air, postal traffic, road, railway, sea) with special focus on counterfeit pharmaceutical products, smuggled by express mail or postal parcels. The operation required intensive exchange of information which lead to selection and identification of high risk consignments. Operation KNOW HOW was carried out in November 2015, with the participation of all SELEC Member States. A total of 127 messages were exchanged during the operation, with 117 seizure/detentions reported.

**Joint investigations**

A total number of 13 joint investigations were supported by SELEC under the umbrella of Anti-Fraud and Anti-Smuggling Task Force.

**Joint investigation ALEKS** in the field of Customs duty evasion involved Republic of Moldova and Romania, and led to the arrest of 5 persons (including 2 organizers), seizure of truck with trailer and the transported goods in total value of 143,000 Euro.

The investigation revealed that a Moldovan company used to counterfeit the documents regarding the operations for goods’ import in view of absconding from Customs duties. SELEC channels were used in order to exchange information and initiate the checks regarding the transit and import of goods to Republic of Moldova, especially through Romania. SELEC supported an operational meeting where it was commonly agreed to conduct real time controls at RO-MD border regarded transportation of imported goods.

*This joint investigation was awarded the Third prize for the first semester of 2015 by SELEC Bi-annual Awards Committee.*
A total number of 15 requests and 20 pieces of information were initiated among member countries and partners in the framework of the Anti-Terrorism Task Force.

In 2015, SELEC organized or supported participation in 5 meetings and activities at international level including a Workshop on Dual Use Commodities, an operational meeting dedicated to ongoing joint investigation within SEE region and other international meetings on related topics.

The Workshop on Dual Use Commodities for prosecutors and investigators, organized jointly with United States Department of Energy, International Nonproliferation Export Control Program (INECP) took place on 23 – 24th of June 2015, at SELEC training center in Bucharest/ Romania with participants from SELEC Member States and from United States of America.
The aim of the workshop was to bring together law enforcement authorities and prosecutors from SELEC Member States to have discussions that would emphasize the value of strategic trade control systems and practical factors that make such systems effective.

The event was a two-day activity, first day included a mix of presentations on dual use commodities, global overview and current situation in the field in the Member States, while in the second day, a practical exercise based on dual-use goods fictive scenario was carried out.

The participants agreed that these kind of meetings have a powerful role for increasing the awareness of the investigators and prosecutors from the Member States with a view to prevent and fight more efficiently against illicit trafficking of dual use goods.

Related to the involvement in activities carried out at international level, SELEC was represented at the OSCE-wide Counter Terrorism Expert Conference, at the Regional Workshop on the challenges posed by a preventive criminal justice response to terrorism and Foreign Terrorist Fighters organized by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) and the Terrorism Prevention Branch of UNODC jointly with European Union and at the Meeting of the Southeast European Firearms Expert Group.

**Joint investigations**

During 2015, two joint investigations were supported by SELEC under the umbrella of the Anti-Terrorism Task Force.
Task Force Meeting

The 8th meeting of the Container Security Task Force was held on 21st of April 2015, at SELEC premises in Bucharest/ Romania, with participants from SELEC Member States, and from European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM), Israel, Kingdom of Spain and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

The meeting provided a place for discussing the current situation on container security area, new trends and challenges, as well as further steps to be taken for developing this Task Force. The representatives of the Member States and Kingdom of Spain made interesting presentations in this field including successful joint investigations carried our last year, while UNODC representatives gave an overview on UNODC/WCO Container Control Programme. During the meeting, the 2013-2014 Regional Assessment on Container Security was presented.

The participants strongly underlined the necessity to increase the institutional cooperation among SELEC Members States and Partners, by facilitating the exchange of information and sharing of good practices.
Regional Assessment on Container Security for 2013 – 2014 - Conclusions

The aim of the assessment is to bring useful conclusions for better understanding the situation and improving the existing methodologies of transnational cooperation for tackling containers with illicit cargos and combating relevant Customs infringements and violations, as well as to assist in providing a deeper understanding of the threats and concerns that Customs authorities face on daily basis.

SELEC Member States considered that the container traffic is important mostly for both maritime shipments and inland consignments.

Demand for imported/exported goods and financial growth are the most important factors that might influence the increase of the annual flow of containers in the region. On the other hand, the main factors considered relevant for the decrease of the annual flow of the containers are the financial recession and the decreased demand of goods.

In the Southeast European region the reported free zones are located mostly in the proximity of maritime or river ports or in places where there is sufficient infrastructure.

Customs Authorities from most SELEC Member States reported that the number of electronic processed transactions and simplified procedures implemented in their daily business for import-export container cargo clearance during the last two years were stable.

The Member States considered that, in order to detect illegal freights in containers, well trained personnel, hand mobile X-Ray units and new technical components such as scanners, play an important role.

SELEC Member States have different legal frameworks related to the percentage (between 3.9- 50%) of inbound/outbound container shipments that must be submitted for mandatory inspections before their delivery to the recipients.

Almost all SELEC Member States reported that the implementation of new regulations influenced the security measures ensuring the flow of container traffic.

The most important common container security objectives for protecting the supply chain in the region are to comply with international regulations and standards, and to increase the use of modern detection methodologies.

Good leadership and coordination and efficient Customs’ personnel handling the risk management process were considered the main drivers for sharing risk-based data facilitating the container risk management system in Southeast Europe. Counterfeited goods were considered as the most important threat for the container security in the region affecting the borders of all SELEC Member States, followed by cigarettes and drugs/precursors. Containers coming from People’s Republic of China appeared to pose the most serious threat to the container security of countries in the region, being the origin country for various types of seized commodities such as counterfeit goods, toys, consumer goods and cigarettes.

SELEC Member States emphasized the high importance for future inter-Task Force cooperation with Anti-Fraud and Anti-Smuggling Task Force, followed by Anti-Drug Trafficking Task Force and Environment and Nature Related Crimes Task Force.
A total of 17 requests and 57 pieces of information were initiated among member countries and partners in the framework of the Environment and Nature Related Crimes Task Force.

In 2015 SELEC organized or supported participation in several meetings, including the annual Task Force meeting, an operational meeting dedicated to ongoing joint investigation within Southeast European region and other international meetings on related topics.

**Task Force meeting**

The 5th meeting of the Task Force on Environment and Nature Related Crimes was held on 24th of November 2015, at SELEC premises in Bucharest/ Romania, with the participation of SELEC Member States’ experts and representatives from Europol, Kingdom of Spain, AIPROM, OMV Petrom and RCS&RDS.

During the meeting, participants discussed the current situation in the field of countering environment and nature related crimes, sharing challenges and good practices, assessing also the future steps to be taken for developing the operational activities within this Task Force.
The Evaluation Report on Regional Operation CLEAN EARTH on counterfeit plant protection products and hazardous waste was also presented.

Evaluation Report on Regional Operation CLEAN EARTH

Regional Operation CLEAN EARTH on counterfeit plant protection products and hazardous waste was carried out for a period of 14 days:

- All SELEC Member States (Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Bulgaria, Republic of Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Hellenic Republic, Hungary, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Republic of Serbia and Republic of Turkey) and two SELEC Partners (Italy and Kingdom of Spain) participated in the CLEAN EARTH Regional Operation;

- Twenty eight competent national authorities were involved, carrying out a total number of 54,232 inspections;

- 78 investigations were initiated;

- SELEC Member States exchanged both pre-arrival and feedback messages;

- Seizures of plant protection products and hazardous substances were made by SELEC Member States during the CLEAN EARTH Operation; the total estimated value of the commodities seized is approximately 105,000 Euro.

Joint investigations

Two joint investigations were supported by SELEC under the umbrella of the Cultural Heritage Goods subgroup.
During 2015 SELEC intensified its cooperative relations with the existing partners, and established also new relationships with a number of key stakeholders worldwide.

In addition to the framework of cooperation envisaged by the status of Operational Partner or Observer, SELEC continuously establishes, maintains and further enhances the ways of collaboration with other countries, organizations and bodies.

The countries that we cooperate with since the creation of the Center renewed their willingness to continue the collaboration with SELEC as provided by new Convention, so that in 2015, Czech Republic, French Republic and International Organization for Migration re-confirmed their status of Observer to SELEC, in accordance with the procedure regulated by the relevant Council Decision.

Considering the current situation born by the recent immigration movement in the region and SELEC’s policy in coordinating with other international actors, SELEC reconfirmed in 2015 its Observer status to the International Organization for Migration.

SELEC continued the good cooperation with United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), based on their Observer status to SELEC and on the concluded Memorandum of Understanding between the two organizations.

In order to discuss possibilities of further developing the collaboration between SELEC and UNODC, Ambassador Yury Fedotov, Under-Secretary General of the United Nations, Director-General of the United Nations Office in Vienna and Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, visited SELEC Headquarters. The discussions focused on the usage of data provided in SELEC analytical reports and useful outcomes of inter-agency meetings initiated by UNODC.
SELEC and UNODC are participating in each other’s activities and meetings, one example being the participation of the Director for Operations of SELEC as a keynote speaker to the Regional Workshop on the challenges posed by a preventive criminal justice response to terrorism and Foreign Terrorist Fighters.

The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (UN CTED) organized a two-day study visit to SELEC of the ASEAN police officials and ASEANOPOL Secretariat representatives. During the visit, the representatives of Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, SEARCCT, ASEANOPOL Secretariat and UN CTED, were delivered detailed presentations and explanations about SELEC’s legal framework and internal legislation that ensure its efficient functioning, as well as about its activities and results.

The purpose of the study visit was to strengthen the understanding of how SELEC practices could serve as a model for establishing a regional mechanism for effective law enforcement cooperation in Southeast Asia.

With respect to new partners, SELEC has concluded an agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), regarding the cooperation in the area of nuclear security, setting up the framework of cooperation for exchanging information, developing projects, conducting trainings, workshops and researches.

IAEA is an intergovernmental organization with 168 member states, created in 1957 in response to the fears and expectations resulting from the discovery of nuclear energy.
In addition to the existing Operational Partners, during 2015, the discussions related to the process of granting this status to Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre (CARICC) and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia continued, common activities being developed with these applicants, among which it worths mentioning the “Practical Training Course on Drug Trafficking Investigations, Controlled Delivery Operations and Money Laundering Investigations in Southeast Europe”, organized for a group of counter-narcotic officers from Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. On behalf of SELEC, the activity involved providing lecturers which shared their expertise and experiences related to the topic to the participants, along with other speakers assigned by Republic of Bulgaria, Romania, Republic of Turkey and USA (DEA), under SELEC’s organization.

Having regard the continuous efforts in fighting organized crime in the Southeast European region, in order to balance the available financial resources with the increased volume of activities, we intensified our endeavors to attract external additional funding, the Danube Region Project Fund being a successful example in this regard, as SELEC’s project “Countering Trafficking in Persons” was selected out of 205 projects applications.

The project activities are envisaged to be developed in the framework of the Task Force Mirage, with the support of all SELEC Member States and with the participation of the Danube countries, thus covering the whole Danube region.

In this project SELEC is the Lead Partner while competent authorities from Republic of Bulgaria, Republic of Croatia and Romania are its Project Partners.
SEEPAG continues to function successfully under SELEC’s auspices, having more than 12 years of existence as the prosecutorial network operating in the Southeast European region.

Under the Moldovan Chairmanship, the 26th SEEPAG Conference having as a topic “Practical aspects of the mutual legal assistance related to the drug trafficking cases” was held in Chisinau/Republic of Moldova, on 28 April 2015. The event gathered, besides the SEEPAG Members, high-level representatives from the Prosecution Office of Republic of Moldova, and experts from Kingdom of Belgium, Ukraine, European Judicial Network and Regional Cooperation Council.
At the end of the conference, it was concluded that drug trafficking cases involve all states, from origin to destination, and in order to combat transnational organised crime, all states of the chain of drug trafficking should be involved, either to have parallel investigations or to create joint investigation teams.

The discussions during the 26th SEEPAG Conference focused on matters related to the controlled deliveries, rogatory letters, undercover agents, and other aspects of legal assistance requests.

According to the rotation procedure provided by the General Guidelines of SEEPAG, the Chairmanship was transferred, following that Montenegro to hold the SEEPAG Chairmanship for the year 2016.

**Participation in European Judicial Network Plenary Sessions**

As a result of the cooperation with European Judicial Network, in 2015 the SEEPAG representative actively participated at the plenary sessions of the European Judicial Network which were held under the Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The 44th plenary session of the European Judicial Network was held under the Latvian Presidency, in June 2015, and the 45th session took place in November 2015, in the framework of the Luxembourg Presidency having as a topic “Procedural rights in judicial cooperation in criminal matters”.
Raising visibility of SEEPAG through the European Judicial Training Network programme

Within the EJTN exchange programme and in partnership with the Supreme Prosecution Office of Romania, SELEC hosted in 2015 two working visits of prosecutors from different EU countries. During the visits, the participants received useful information about SELEC and SEEPAG, their activities, achievements, structure and way of functioning.

The main purpose of the programme is enhancing European judiciary’s practical knowledge of each other judicial systems through direct contacts, exchange of views and experiences between judges, prosecutors and trainers from different EU Member States.
The following plans and reports were developed by SELEC throughout 2015:

**General Plans and Reports**
- Annual Report 2014
- First Semester 2015 Operational Activity Report
- Five-Year Financial Plan 2015-2019

**Analytical Reports**
- 2014 Report on Trafficking in Human Beings and Smuggling of Migrants in Southeast Europe
- 2014 Report on Drug Seizures in Southeast Europe
- 2014 Report on Tobacco Products Smuggling in Southeast Europe
- 2010 - 2013 Statistical Report on Vehicle Crimes in SELEC Member States
- Regional Assessment on Container Security for 2013-2014

**Operational Plans on Regional Operations**
- Action Plan of Operation KNOW HOW targeting counterfeit goods - in common with Albanian Customs
- Action Plan of Operation ECLIPSE targeting tobacco products smuggling - in common with Albanian Customs
- Action Plan of Operation MIRAGE 2015 targeting Illegal migration - in common with Romanian Police
- Action Plan of Operation ORION 3 targeting endangered species - in common with Hungarian Police

**Evaluation Reports on Regional Operations**
- Evaluation Report for Operation HIT targeting illicit trafficking of vehicles
- Evaluation Report for Operation CLEAN EARTH targeting illicit traffic of counterfeit plant protection products and hazardous waste
OUTLINES OF THE REPORT

Police and Customs working together

Report on Drug seizures:
16.8 tons opium-based drugs and 250 tons cannabis products seized in the region

12 Member States
3 Operational Partners
18 Observers

Prosecutors involved
(SEEPAG)

Regional Operation HIT
3 action days
Estimated value of seized vehicles: almost 1.7 million Euro

Regional Operation CLEAN EARTH
78 investigations initiated

Southeast European Tobacco Products Smuggling Report:
over 4 billion pieces of cigarettes seized in the region

Regional Operation MIRAGE
779 exchanges of information

Operational plans and analytical products

Report on Trafficking in Human Beings and Smuggling of migrants:
222,476 detections of illegal migrants in the region
2015 INSIGHTS: Best examples of police and customs cooperation

Swift exchange of information 12 Member States Analytical products
Successful joint investigations and regional operations